cannot be made. The Committee's report has been considered, and orders on it are being issued.

The question of amalgamating the Quilon and Shencotta Forest Divisions was examined, and it was found that the amalgamation would benefit neither the Department nor the people. Punalur is not suitable for being the headquarters; the area is too extensive and the combined charge over the present two Divisions would be too heavy for one officer.

We would like to see lady doctors in all towns; and the question of extending the women's medical service is being considered. It cannot be done quickly. We have to do it gradually.

Urdu is already included as an optional subject for the Arabic Munshi's Examination; and, in the revised English School Leaving Certificate Examination Scheme, Hindi is one of the optional subjects and a second language in English schools.

The Assembly adjourned for lunch at 2 P. M and met again at 3 P. M.

183. Grievances of the cardamom ryots.

Mr. C. A. ABDUL RAHIM (*Peermade taluk*) first spoke about the necessity for reducing the tax on cardamom lands from Rs. 2 to Re. 1 per acre. The world wide economic depression had not spared the cardamom ryots. There was unprecedented fall in the price of cardamom and many cardamom estates were worked at a great loss. Failure of timely rains also contributed not a little to the loss. Large tracts of cardamom areas were allowed to lie waste as it was not possible to get full compensation for the work done, due to the heavy tax, low prices and poor yield. The rubber cultivators were allowed a reduction of land tax on the ground of fall in the price of rubber. Tea planters were comparatively in a favourable position as the tax on tea lands was only Re. 1 per acre. Besides the disabilities mentioned above, the cardamom ryots were subjected to much hardship on account of the coercive steps taken in collecting the amounts due under tax at each instalment. This was hard. Early orders should therefore be issued to suspend coercive steps for recovery of tax due on cardamom lands till the date for payment of the final instalment.

The cardamom ryots experienced serious difficulties in procuring house-sites. The rules for the registry of grass lands were so rigorous that it was not easy to get house-sites registered. Arrangements should therefore be made for the assignment of house-sites to cardamom ryots on easy terms for the beneficial enjoyment of the cardamom lands.

Licenses should be issued for the opening of salt depots and tobacco shops in all the frontier *chowkeys* as well as in all important centres of the Devicolam Division for the convenience of the ryots. The existing practice of issuing licenses for opening depots and shops for centres covering a radius of 10 miles was causing much inconvenience to the people, especially in view of the absence of easy means of communication.

A dispensary should be established at Vandanmettu at an early date. Vandanmettu and the neighbouring places were malaria

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regions. The people residing on the hills had to go to British parts for medical relief. The Plague Medical Officer at Kumili, who had not sufficient work, could be placed in charge of the Kumili dispensary also and the Medical Officer there could be posted to the new dispensary at Vandanmettu as a temporary measure. Thus there would not be much additional cost.

The Kumili-Devicolam road should be completed as early as possible. The cardamom ryots were experiencing very great difficulties for want of a road fit for cart traffic. It would appear that the Kottayam Executive Engineer had submitted an estimate for Rs. 6,000 for completing the Kumili-Devicolam road up to Vandanmettu. The estimate should be sanctioned immediately, and the road completed at least up to Vandanmettu.

The necessity for issuing free gun licenses to land-owners residing in the High Ranges had been repeatedly urged on the attention of the Government, but nothing was done in the matter. Firearms were quite essential to the cardamom ryots to protect themselves and their crops from the wild beasts.

Lastly, the member spoke about the desirability of registering the marshy lands within the reserved forests for the cultivation of paddy and other crops. This would avoid the necessity of getting down rice from British India at high cost. The Government also would be benefited by the consequent increase under land revenue.

DEWAN'S REPLY: I do not think you can compare, Mr. Abdul Rahim, the condition of the cardamom industry with that of rubber. I do not think the assessment of two rupees per acre is excessive. Coercive steps are necessary and are only taken when the payment is not made in time. To safeguard the interests of Government these coercive steps must be taken whenever necessary.

House-sites are being assigned, and there is no objection to the registry of land, which is available for registry, when asked for. If you give me any specific instances, where hardship has been caused, Government will enquire into them.

In regard to the question of registry of marshy lands in the Cardamom Hills reserve, Government are enquiring into that and certain lands are being set apart for registry.

The question of opening salt depots and tobacco shops in all the frontier *chowkeys* in addition to the existing depots, was investigated, and it was reported that they were not necessary. There are no complaints that they are not sufficient. If you can point out any particular area which is badly served, I shall consider that.

Gun licenses are necessary so as to keep a hold over the owner. Licenses for locally purchased guns are issued free to estate owners.

The Administrative Board, Medical Services, reports that a dispensary at Vandanmettu is not necessary at present.

As regards the Kumili-Devicolam road, estimates have been sent up and are awaiting sanction. When these are sanctioned, the road would be got through as early as possible.

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